

Supported Education

1.2.5 Psychiatric disabilities and related educational limitations

The term psychiatric disability is used to describe a psychological and emotional state of mind that influences one's thoughts, emotions and behavior in such a way that one cannot optimally function in daily life. The most common psychiatric conditions are the following:

- Anxiety and panic disorders (e.g., phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorders and post-traumatic stress disorders).
- Mood disorders (e.g., depression and bipolar disorder).
- Personality disorders (e.g., borderline personality disorder; anti-social personality disorder).
- Psychotic disorders (e.g., schizophrenia).
- Addiction (e.g., alcohol and drugs).
- Eating disorders (e.g., anorexia nervosa and bulimia).
- Autism spectrum disorder (e.g., Asperger's syndrome and PDD-NOS).
- ADHD.

Research has shown that about six per cent of students in higher education experience psychiatric problems (Broenink & Gorter, 2001). More than half (55 per cent) of this group of students is (severely) hindered by their psychiatric problems during college (Plemper, 2005). This hindrance negatively influences the study results. Research has shown that students with psychiatric problems on average study more but get lower grades and fewer credits than students without psychiatric problems (van den Broek, Muskens, & Winkels, 2013; ResearchNed/ITS, 2012). Besides, this group appears to have an increased risk of early school leaving.

Many problems are experienced with cognitive functioning, as for instance problems with:

- Attention
- Concentration
- Memory
- Planning
- Motivation
- Organization

(Kidd, Kaur-Bajwa, & Haji-Khamneh, 2012; Megivern, Pellegrito, & Mowbray, 2003; Pratt, Gill, Barrett, & Roberts, 2007).

Several studies have shown that many people with psychiatric conditions want to study but also want and need support with that (Gilbert, Heximer, & Walker, 1997; McLean & Andrews, 1999; Unger, 1998; Wertheimer, 1997). In order to know what kind of Supported Education services are needed the most and thus have to be included in the toolkit, we wanted to identify the specific barriers that people with psychiatric disabilities face whilst studying (again). In paragraphs 1.2.6 and 1.2.7, these barriers are discussed.